

Public English Teaching for Doctoral Students in Project-driven Mode-----Organization Design and Implementation of Doctoral International English Conference Course

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Abstract

Project-driven learning refers to the inquiry learning around a project, based on humanism and constructivism learning theory, centered with the concept and principle of discipline, under the guidance of teachers. This model takes learner as the center, which is advantageous to the students' constructing the knowledge in the simulation of real project and transforms the knowledge into the skill. Guided by the mode, the doctoral course, "International Conference English" curriculum comprehensively trained communication skills in English and intercultural interaction, in the classroom under the background of simulating International Conference; through the completion of the project, experience each link of international conference and obtain intuitive experience.

Keywords

"Doctoral International English Conference" ; Project-driven; Humanism Educational View; Constructivism.

1. Background

The training goal of doctoral students is to cultivate high-level research talent, which needs to have an international perspective in scientific research, and English as the working language for academic exchanges. But many students learned English Intermittently and, due to the lack of necessary language environment; language knowledge is not transmitted into communicative ability. On the one hand, their English proficiency is difficult to meet the needs of scientific research work.

On the other hand, they felt that the public English teaching is difficult to apply, even taking learning English as a burden. "Project driven learning", namely Project- based learning (PBL), lay emphasis on combining knowledge with meaningful tasks, creating a realistic simulation of the situation to a certain extent, guiding the students to complete the project and constructing the multi-ability. Under the guidance of the theory, we offered a "doctoral International English Conference" course, simulating the international conference as the general teaching situation, using nested project driven teaching mode, making the students fully exercise English listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation skills in the simulation of the real project, in order to make the actual work transfer in scientific research.

2. Theoretical Basis and Guiding Ideology

2.1 Humanism Education Theory

Humanistic education concept originated from humanistic psychology. Influence of humanistic psychology of language teaching is not English teaching as pure knowledge and skill training, but respect the individual, exert personal creativity, proposing the combination of wisdom and love advocated in the learning process. Rodgers, known as the father of humanistic psychology, believes that emotion and cognition are two inseparable parts of the human spiritual world. He believes that only meaningful learning make individual behavior, attitude, personality have major changes when choosing a policy of action in the future. This is not only a learning of growing knowledge, but also a learning that integrates with every part of the experience.

Rogers theory of learning on meaning includes four major elements: (1) Study possesses the characteristics of personal involvement, with two aspects of emotion and cognition (2) Learning is a self-initiated process, even the driving force or stimulus is from the outside, but the feeling of finding, understanding and appreciating comes from the inside; (3) Learning is pervasive, that is to say, it will make students' behavior, attitudes, and personality change; (4) Learning is the students' self-evaluation.

2.2 Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivism has a new understanding towards knowledge. Constructivism holds that knowledge is not wholly intact transferred to the learner, but the learners actively constructed on the original experience. According to the constructivists, learning process is not the passive acceptance of knowledge, but the students actively construct the internal mental representation in a certain situation, through mutual cooperation and conversation, which is based on the original experience. Context, collaboration, conversation and meaning construction are four key elements of construction.

He Kehang defines the teaching mode under the guidance of the constructivism theory as: "taking the student as the center, teachers play a role of organizer, instructor, helper and promoter in the whole process of teaching, give full play to the initiative of students' enthusiasm using context, collaboration, conversation learning environment. In order to make the students realize the construction of new knowledge." Gagon&Collay, et al. conclude that constructivist learning design contains six elements: creating situations, asking questions, building bridges, organizing collaboration, demonstrating results and reflective processes.

3. Characteristics of Project-driven Teaching Model

Project-driven teaching mode refers to a new kind of inquiry learning mode centralized with the concept and principle of discipline, with the purpose of producing and selling products to customers, using a variety of resources to carry out research activities in the real world, and solve a series of interrelated problems in a certain period of time. The process is usually divided into selected items, design planning, and division of labor, work and achievement exchange activities evaluation.

Project-based learning emphasizes three centers of "experience", "student" and "activity". Based on the existing experience, the students interact with the external environment through the activities of the actual organization, and gradually improve their cognitive structure through "assimilation" and "adaptation". Teachers are no longer the "authority" of knowledge instruction, but the identity of "intermediaries" constructed by students. Williams&Burdens interpreted intermediary's responsibilities as the following: cultivating students' independent learning ability; helping students acquire and process language materials; teacher-student interaction; giving response and feedback to students' understanding the intent of the teacher's mediation. Under the guidance of the model of classroom teaching, simulating real life environment, taking one or more related research tasks as the main line. The students construct the corresponding knowledge and ability through the experience of real life and direct exchanges and mutual cooperation.

The model is not concerned with isolated knowledge points or skills. The design of the project always reflect the concerns of students in the real world, always contains highlights to stimulate students' interests. In order to complete the project, students need to mobilize multi-disciplinary knowledge or a number of skills, thereby enhancing the mutual cooperation and team management and time management capabilities.

Learning process requires the use of a variety of cognitive tools and information resources. To complete the project, Learning participants are bound to seek resource support. Students can make full use of the expert resources outside the school and the modern network platform and online resources, search for integrated information, mutual cooperation, sharing resources. Students' learning results are presented in the form of works, and the results of learning are shown as students' realistic achievements. Students show the learning process and results through visible products or

special reports, students participate in the evaluation of their learning process, and further improve the work through discussion and feedback.

4. Organization Design and Implementation of Doctoral International English Conference

4.1 Organization and Implementation of Curriculum sub-projects

The author divides the course content into seven sub-projects: International Conference process, conference letter writing, conference paper writing, conference presentation, defense discussion, conference hosting and intercultural communication. The first lesson, teachers elaborate on the teaching content, teaching syllabus, teaching and assessment methods in detail. Students eventually need to complete the project and sub-project content, and the class will be divided into seven sub-project teams, each includes three to five members. Each group chooses the sub-projects voluntarily. Table 1 takes the first sub-project international conference process as an example, lists the implementation of the project.

Teachers and students are the main body of the learning process, which is the combination of teaching and learning. The class content is task-based, students complete a comprehensive project in the task situation, actively extract information, integrate and develop effective output, information retrieval, problem analysis, collaboration, communicative and self management ability. At the same time, the classroom also emphasizes the intermediary role of teachers, encourage students to use the existing experience, comprehensively coordinate pre-class and after-school learning in each link, build a platform for students to build knowledge and skills.

Table 1 Organization and implementation of international conference sub-projects

| Procedure | Students' tasks | Teachers' tasks | Objectives |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| Project Initiation | Searching for the discipline related information of the international academic conference in the network resources database | Leading students to review the past international conference and inspire students with the conductive questions | Activating students' original experience around the teaching contents and guiding students to the problem situation. |
| Designing plan | All the group members discuss the working plan for the project and sub-divide it into three modules, Conference information retrieval, conference activity procedures, conference organization introduction. Assign tasks to the group members of the sub-project and electing a responsible person for the project. | Guiding students to think about the unsolved problems and conceive the tools, methods required by the project, and grasp the completion time and figure out the possible problems. | Deciding the distribution of the tasks and role division and develop students' planning ability. |
| Plan Implementation | The group members should search for materials and prepare PPT presentation, and the project directors should report the overall completion situation to the group members and control progress and upload the finished PPT materials to the network platform in the given time span. | Making online tutoring and Q&A, and identifying students' request by observing students, task completion and emotional response and design the following teaching plan. | Searching information, file and sort up, develop students' comprehensive ability of reading, writing, listening, speaking and self-regulation capability. |
| Project Demonstration | Group members make specific reports on their module and discuss in the whole class. | Participate in the class discussion equally. | Comprehensively practice students' listening and on-site defense ability and deepen the thoughts through the confrontation of ideas. |
| Assessment and reflection | Making peer assessment according to the process of the project completion and outcome. | Summarize and evaluate the grasped knowledge and the entire completion of the project. | Develop students' self-regulation, self-control and self-emancipation ability to escalate self-study capability. |

4.2 Organization and Implementation of General Curriculum program

The general program is the actual combat experience of simulated International Conference at the end of the term. Generally the arrangement is in the last four to six teaching hours of the semester. Students are not only the organizers, but also the participants of the meeting, integrate the whole course learning content and practice. Teachers made the macro grasp, overall coordination and providing help in the whole project implementation process. It can be said that the simulation of international conference is directly related to the teaching effect. In the preparation phase, ample time is a necessary condition for organizing a good course.

Practice shows that preparation can begin at about half of the course. The whole class is divided into three groups according to the principle of voluntariness, namely "Organizing Committee", "academic committee" and "meeting chair". Each team elects a director in charge to arrange the division of the members within the group, control the progress of the work, and contact the other groups, responsible for coordination and convergence. Responsibilities of each group are shown in table 2.

Table 2 Group division of the International Conference Organization

| Organizational Institution | Specific duty |
|----------------------------|--|
| Organizing Committee | Release meeting notice and mail invitation letters; design conference flow; maintain conference equipment; arrange seats, conference site organization and prepare meeting snacks. |
| Academic committee | Print soliciting contributions, and recruit paper abstract; divide the meeting participants according to the major; define the topic presenters and the name lists of the group speech; arrange the sequence of speech and print the paper collection. |
| Conference chairperson | Take charge of the opening and closing speech of the conference and host the general meeting and group meeting. |

Due to the different professional background of students, the final simulation of international conference has interdisciplinary characteristics. All students, as participants of the meeting, required to submit papers to the academic committee in the three weeks before the meeting, and then the "academic committee" unified arrangements. Two weeks prior to the start of the mock conference, the academic committee sent summaries of the conference paper to all participants to seek suggestion and feedback to the authors. At the same time, "academic committee" divided the general assembly into several branches according to the students' profession, arrange the students with similar major together. "Organizing Committee" release the meeting flow one week before the conference.

The day before the start of the simulated meeting, the "Organizing Committee" members of the venue ensure that the equipment and equipment in the conference site are adjusted normally. When the meeting began, the host announced the commencement of the meeting, and then invites the students to play the "guests" to make the opening remarks, and then the host invited and introduced four to five keynote of ten-minute conference speech, and to answer questions proposed by the audience. After ten minutes tea breaks, group meeting commenced, and each venue will arrange a moderator, members of the venue do about five minutes speech and answer questions from the audience. Finally, the host invited the "guests" to make the closing remarks and announced the end of the meeting.

4.3 Assessment and Evaluation of the Course

The assessment and evaluation of the course highlighted the point of students as the center, the characteristics of project-driven teaching mode. Taking into account the actual situation of uneven level of doctoral students English, with the combination of formative assessment with summative assessment methods, combining the evaluation with teaching organically. The course assessment consists of three parts: one is students' participation and completion of the sub project, and participation in the usual class activities; two is the organization work and student oral defense at the meeting; three is the written examination, the main assessment in the International Conference on the basic reading, translation and writing ability.

The completion of sub-projects and total projects include students' self-evaluation, individual evaluation and teachers' evaluation to the students. The ultimate goal of the course is to enable students to use in practice, so those who actively participate in international conferences and served as the school organizers or read the papers, or successfully apply to go abroad to participate in the meeting, we give extra points.

5. Effect and Suggestion

Through a questionnaire survey and interviews with 89 doctoral students, all students agree that this course is very beneficial to their future career development. 96 students believe that the course has a direct help to their future work and research; there are 88 students believe that the course reflects the real situation and practiced a lot. 82 students believe that they will strive to win exchange opportunities of participating in International Conference. That the project-based curriculum design applied to doctoral courses of International English Conference is conducive to directly "docking" to the real needs of the students, applying language knowledge into language skills and exerted in practice. In the actual teaching, the author also found that in order to achieve the desired teaching effect, there are some practical difficulties.

From the teacher's point of view, the communication content of the simulation conference from daily dialogue to academic exchanges, which is a great challenge to teachers. To be competent for the teaching of this course, teachers not only need to have a solid language skills, but also need to have extensive experience in participating in international conferences and broad knowledge, understanding the professional background and scientific research of the students. From the perspective of students, some middle-aged students learned English intermittently. Basic oral English expression ability is deficient, even ashamed to speak, which bring some difficulties to extend the course smoothly. In view of the above practical problems, in order to instruct the course better, the author puts forward the following suggestions.

First of all, teachers must constantly reflect on teaching, expand their knowledge, concern in multi-channeled way and participate in international conferences in the field of professional students. At the same time, in the teaching process, the academic experts of the students' department can be invited to participate in the conference. Secondly, before commencing the international English conference courses, public speaking classes could be offered as early courses to train students' basic oral skills and presentation skills. For the older, weaker students, teachers can also appropriately drill sentences to help them overcome difficulties to make them talk in the simulated international conference, dare to speak, and get a sense of achievement.

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